

**Attention:** News, Education, Business Editors

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**News release website:** <http://newsroom.unl.edu/releases>

## **Lincoln Northeast teacher Snyder to receive McAuliffe Award from UNL**

Lincoln, Neb., Feb. 28, 2013 – Inspired teaching has earned Lincoln Northeast High School reading teacher Kimberly Snyder the Christa McAuliffe Prize for Courage and Excellence in Education.

The College of Education and Human Sciences at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln presents the annual award to a teacher who exemplifies the character of Christa McAuliffe, an educator who died in the 1986 Challenger disaster. Snyder will be recognized at a banquet March 3 in Lincoln.

Snyder said earning her master's degree in K-12 reading education from UNL in 2006 was the launch pad that propelled a good teacher to an inspired teacher.

"My master's program opened my world to the beauty of truly connecting with students," Snyder said. "I learned to look at my students as individuals and to capitalize on their strengths, not focus on their weaknesses."

Since 2006, Snyder has been a reading teacher at Northeast, where she motivates struggling readers to overcome challenges. She said the passion she found while working on her master's degree gave her the inspiration to share new teaching strategies with colleagues. Her staff development program has expanded throughout Lincoln Public Schools and the state.

Her 23-year teaching career has had stops at Bradshaw Junior-Senior High School, Mead Junior-Senior High School, Raymond Central Junior-Senior High School and Wahoo High School. She is also a consultant and staff developer for the Nebraska Department of Education. Snyder lives in Wahoo.

Also, the McAuliffe Prize selection committee gave special recognition this year to Grand Island Public Schools teacher Jane Kipper, who has taught fourth grade at Howard Elementary since 1996. The committee noted that Kipper demonstrates the character and spirit that the award represents. She is known for her creative and innovative teaching style and her compassion for children with special needs.

Teachers recognized with the McAuliffe prize go beyond excellence by showing courage. Courage can be displayed in many different ways, but according to award creator Gregg Wright, associate professor at UNL's Center on Children, Family and the Law, the common denominator among all recipients is the lasting and positive effect they have had on their students and on their peers.

(more)

## **Lincoln Northeast teacher Snyder to receive McAuliffe Award from UNL, Page 2**

The recipient receives a \$1,000 stipend and a plaque at a banquet held in his or her honor. The honoree's school receives a \$500 award to help support important school activities.

The award is made possible by gifts and contributions. The Lincoln Journal Star, for example, donated the proceeds of the sale of a drawing created by cartoonist Paul Fell in the memory of McAuliffe. Other contributors include the Flavel Wright family, Rocke Huntington, State Farm Insurance, the Nebraska State Education Association, UNL College of Education and Human Sciences, Don Spinar of RBC Wealth Management, and Mildred and Melvin Mobley.

Nomination information and additional details about the Christa McAuliffe Prize for Courage and Excellence in Education are available at [cehs.unl.edu/cehs/awards](http://cehs.unl.edu/cehs/awards).